

## **Standards Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2017**

#### **Present**

Independent Co-opted Member: N Jackson – In the Chair  
Councillors Andrews, Connolly, Evans and Lanchbury  
Ringway Parish Council: Councillor C O'Donovan

#### **Apologies**

Councillor Cooley  
Independent Co-opted Members: G Linnell  
Independent Person: A Eastwood  
Independent Person: S Beswick

#### **ST/17/04     Minutes**

#### **Decision**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2017 as a correct record.

#### **ST/17/05     Members' Update on Ethical Governance**

The Committee received the report of the City Solicitor which invited the Committee to approve the content of the draft Members' Update set out in the appendix which was circulated to all members.

The Committee requested that page 9 of the Ethical Governance Update be updated to show that the guidance has been revised as requested by the Standards Committee on 16 March 2017 as the original text had omitted the year.

#### **Decision**

1. To approve the content of the draft Members' Update with the addition of the year date on page 9.

#### **ST/17/06     Member Training and Development**

The Committee received the report of the City Solicitor which invited the Committee to note the report and suggest any improvements which could be made to the provision of member training by the Council.

The Committee recommended that the Members Working Group take a more robust approach to members who register for training and then fail to attend. This was especially pertinent for activities that incurred a cost to the Council, including the cost of officer time. In addition, the Committee recommended that more information is sought as to the reasons for non-attendance, and whether sessions are being run at times that are convenient for members, especially those who also have outside employment.

The Committee noted that Members who receive mandatory training cannot sit on the relevant Committee unless the training is completed.

### **Decision**

1. To note the report
2. To recommend that the Members Working Group take a robust approach to Members who register for training and fail to attend on the day
3. To recommend that the Members Working Group investigate whether sessions are being run at the most convenient time for Members.
4. To request a report regarding the induction training plan for new members for the march 2018 meeting of the Committee.

### **ST/17/07 Localism Act 2011 – Dispensations**

The Committee received the report of the City Solicitor which advised the Committee of the Monitoring Officers proposals regarding the grant of dispensations to enable members of the Council to participate and vote on matters notwithstanding the fact that the Member may have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest ('DPI'), and sought the Committee's views on the grant of various previous dispensations.

The Committee confirmed that the number of dispensations was stable and not rising.

### **Decision**

1. To note the Monitoring Officer's proposal to advise all Council Members to submit a written request through their Group Leaders or Group Secretaries for the grant of a dispensation pursuant to section 33(2)(a) of the Localism Act 2011 ('the Localism Act') allowing them to participate and vote on:
  - i. Setting the Council Tax or a precept under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended from time to time or any superseding legislation) and matters directly related to such decisions such as budget calculations.
  - ii. Allowances, payments or indemnities given to Members of the Council
2. To agree the dispensation referred to at paragraph 1(i), should include determining the local council tax reduction scheme and other discounts and premiums pursuant to changes made by the Local Government Finance Act 2012.
3. To agree the dispensation referred to at paragraph 1 (ii), should include all allowances payable to Council Members (including special responsibility allowances).

4. To agree to advise any Members of the Council who are tenants of Manchester City Council to submit a written request for the grant of a dispensation to allow them to participate and vote on matters in relation to housing (provided that those functions do not relate particularly to the lease or tenancy of the Council Member concerned).
5. To be minded to grant dispensations to allow any Member who has a DPI to make representations at a meeting where members of the public have the same entitlement (e.g. to allow a Council Member who is making an application for planning permission to attend and make representations at a meeting of the Council's Planning Committee which is to hear the matter in the same way as a member of the public).

### **ST/17/08 Updating the Member Registers: Interests and Hospitality**

The Committee received the report of the City Solicitor which informed the committee of the procedures for updating the Registers that cover Members' interests and any gifts and hospitality declared and provide details of gifts and hospitality the Lord Mayor has accepted and refused during the 2016/17 Municipal Year.

The Committee confirmed that the Lord Mayor's Office provide guidance as to whether a gift is a personal gift or a City Gift. The Committee recommended that there should be standard written guidance on this issue.

#### **Decision**

1. To note the report
2. To recommend that written guidance is made available as to whether a gift is a city gift or a personal gift.

### **ST/17/09 Draft Annual Governance Statement 2016/17**

The Committee received the report of the City Treasurer which contained the draft 2016/17 Annual Governance Statement (AGS) which has been produced following completion of the annual review of the Council's governance arrangements and systems of internal control. The processes followed to produce the AGS are outlined in the report, including improvements made this year. Related activity to promote better understanding and transparency in relation to governance arrangements, both within the Council and for the public is also described.

The Committee noted the report and also noted that Risk Management and Reporting (Finance) and the changes made to the Constitution were new issues for consideration. They also queried how the Annual Report of the Standards Committee, (which contains the Committee's assurances regarding aspects of corporate governance), was used to inform the Annual Governance Statement as no reference was made to it. The report author agreed that reference would be made to the Annual Report.

**Decision**

1. To note the report.

**ST/17/10 Work Programme**

The Committee received the report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which set out the work programme for forthcoming meetings.

The Committee requested that further information be provided to the March 2018 meeting of the Committee regarding the New Member Induction Programme.

**Decision**

1. To note the work programme
2. To request further information about the New Member Induction Programme at the March meeting of the Committee.